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HEN YORK INTELLIGING



Colby: Cleaning up his image?

The Company Minds Its Manners

The CIA is quietly launching a public-relations campaign to convince the establishment that its existence is worth preserving. So, the Harvard Business Club of Washington was recently invited over to CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, for cocktails and a little hard sell from Director William Colby. Equipped with charts and slides, Colby detailed the structure of the organization, discoursed on the necessity for some secret operations, and discussed the CIA's involvement in the six-day Arab-Israeli war. One of the agency's Middle East problems, said Colby, was that intelligence agents in the area had not anticipated an Arab attack. A more fundamental flaw in their operations, Colby explained, was that the agency had not "programed enough irrationality" into the Arab-Israeli situation. He promised that every effort would be made to provide more "irrationality" in the future.

Meanwhile, over on Capitol Hill, the word is that Colby's courtship of the establishment may be a little "irrational" itself. A number of congressmen are saying that both the Church and Pike committees investigating U.S. intelligence activities have mishandled their hearings, and as a result, the CIA may get off the hook entirely. One embittered liberal congressman explained it this way: "Frank Church's Senate committee went off into the clouds, playing to the press gallery with sensational stuff about poison dart guns and shellfish toxin. It lost sight of the real purpose of the inquiry-not only what the CIA does, but why it does it. ... Over in the House, Otis Pike is on an ego trip fighting the White House on a side issue of subpoena power, and it's caused a lot of dissension within the committee." The expected outcome: as the investigations drag on and on, Congress will lose interest in the whole subject and will fail to enact any needed controls over the CIA.